

REMARKS

Claims 137, 142-144, 154, 159-161, and 169-171 have been cancelled. Claims 136, 141, 153, 158, and 167 have been amended. Claims 128-136, 138-141, 145-153, 155-158, 162-168, and 172-174 are currently pending in the application. Applicants request reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

Applicants thank the Examiner for favorable consideration and allowance of claims 128-135, 145-152, 162-166, and 172-174.

Claims 136, 153, 167 and 168 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Yamamoto et al., U.S. Patent 4,399,327 (Yamamoto) and claims 141 and 158 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto. In addition, claims 138, 139, 142, 143, 155, 156, 160, 169, and 170 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Yamamoto in view of Preves et al., U.S. Patent 5,757,933.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, but have amended the application to overcome the rejections. Applicants assert that claims 136, 138, 139, 142, 143, 153, 155, 156, 160, and 167-170 are allowable over the cited references and requests withdrawal of the rejections to the claims.

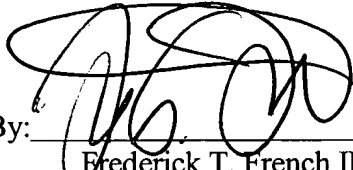
Claims 137, 140, 144, 154, 157, 161, and 171 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have cancelled claims 137, 142-144, 154, 159-161, and 169-171, and amended claims 136, 141, 153, 158 and 167 to include all of the limitations of the cancelled claims, respectively. Applicants submit that these newly amended claims are allowable as well.

Regarding the Examiner's reasons for allowance, Applicants respectfully disagree with the specific reasons for allowance set forth by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed on July 17, 2003, and asserts that the allowability of the claims is instead based upon the features of the claims and the totality of the record.

Based on at least the foregoing, Applicants believe that claims 128-136, 138-141, 145-153, 155-158, 162-168, and 172-174 are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner disagree or have any questions regarding this submission, Applicants invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned at (312) 775-8000.

A Notice of Allowability is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Frederick T. French III
Reg. No. 52,524

Dated: August 26, 2003

McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd.
500 West Madison Street - Ste. 3400
Chicago, Illinois 60661
(312) 775-8000